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The Army's EO Program and Policies



Lesson 7: Effective / Active Listening

Overview

- Describe effective and active listening.
- Identify deterrents to effective listening.
- Identify the elements of effective and active listening.
- Identify methods of enhancing listening.
- Identify the methods used to test understanding of a message.



Introduction

- Effective and active listening will play a major role to you in performing your duties as an EOR.
- You will come in contact with many soldiers, from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.
- Your duties, in addition to being a good communicator, will also require you to be an effective and active listener.
- The communications process is easily blocked when the communicator feels as though they are being ignored.



Introduction

- An excellent example is the wife or husband who reads the newspaper while sitting at the breakfast table and ignores their spouse's comments or conversation.
- As an EOR, you must assist your commander in carrying out the EO Program within your unit, to do this, you must possess effective and active listening skills.
- During this lesson you will learn some methods, if used, will improve your listening skills.



Effective And Active Listening

- Effective Listening is the listening to the words of the speaker and the meaning of the words
- Active Listening is a process in which the listener takes active responsibility to understand the content and feeling of what is being said and then checks with the speaker to see if he/she heard what the speaker intended to communicate



Effective and Active Listening

- As an EOR you may be required to interview individuals within your organization; thus effective and active listening is an essential skill in the communication process.
- The average person listens with only 22-24% effectiveness, but listening amounts to 45% of the communication process.



Effective and Active Listening

- Listening is one of the most neglected of the communication skills.
- Many poor listeners have tried to place the entire burden of the speaker/listener process on the speaker. In other words, “entertain me or I’m out of here.”



Deterrents to Effective/Active Listening

- To understand how to be an effective listener, you first have to understand some of the deterrents to effective listening.
- These deterrents include:
 - Assuming in advance about the subject
 - Mentally criticizing the speaker's delivery
 - Getting over stimulated or over reacting
 - Listening only to the facts
 - Outlining everything
 - Permitting the speaker to be inaudible



Deterrents to Effective/Active Listening

- These deterrents also include:
 - Avoid technical messages
 - Overreacting to certain words or phrases
 - Withdrawing attention/daydreaming



Elements to Effective/Active Listening

- Content - The subject the speaker is addressing. The words and the meaning of the words.
 - Use words that are not complicated and are easy to understand by the others.
 - If you are unsure of the meaning of a word, don't use it.
 - Another method is to ask the speaker the meaning.
- Feelings - The emotions the speaker has when discussing the subject.
 - Is it informative, funny, sincere, etc.?
 - What is the underlying message from the speaker?



Elements to Effective/Active Listening

- **Process** - The manner the speaker delivers the subject matter.
 - This can be oral, written, symbolic, nonverbal, or a combination.
 - Are the oral, written, nonverbal and symbolic gestures congruent?
 - Does the speaker affirm or negate the message.
- **Clarification** - The ability of the individual listening to ask questions and to seek understanding of the subject matter.
 - Clarify any questions which are raised in your mind.
Did you understand and comprehend the text?

Methods For Enhancing Listening

- Active Listening Skills
- Parroting
- Paraphrasing
- Clarifying



Active Listening Skills

- To be an effective active listener requires the use of 4 basic skills.
- These 4 skills are:
 - Check attitude and atmosphere. Be open and listen to the speaker.
 - Keep the channel open and avoid short circuits. Listen to others as you would want them to listen to you.
 - Listening requires response from listener. The kind of response that reassures the speaker they are being received and interpreted
 - Keep the door open. Let the person know you are prepared to listen again.



Active Listening Skills

- There are many methods or behaviors you may use to improve your listening ability. Some of these include:
 - Try to understand the intent and listen for the main points and summarize mentally.
 - Listen now and clarify later.
 - Concentrate on the message, not the person.
 - Mentally trade places with the speaker and analyze your reactions when you realize you're pretending to listen.
 - If you listen attentively, you can usually remember the three or four main points the speaker hoped to communicate.



Methods to Test Understanding

- To test your understanding of what is being said,
it is recommended that you use one of the following methods:
 - Parroting - Repeating verbatim what you heard.
 - Paraphrasing - Reflecting back to the speaker what you heard in your own words.
 - Clarifying - Checking with the speaker to confirm what you think you heard or to check out what you don't understand.



Conclusion

- During this lesson you have learned the importance of effective and active listening.
- Effective and active listening is an important skill you will need to utilize if you want to communicate with soldiers of your unit.



Practical Exercise

“The Cash Register Exercise”

- READ THE FOLLOWING STORY AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE NEXT SLIDE.
 - You may need to read it two or three times.
- “A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened a cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up, and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified promptly.”



Practical Exercise

“The Cash Register Exercise”

• Questions

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. | T | F |
| 2. The robber was a man. | T | F |
| 3. The man did not demand money. | T | F |
| 4. The man who opened the cash register was the owner. | T | F |
| 5. The store owner scooped up the contents of the cash register and ran away. | T | F |
| 6. Someone opened a cash register. | T | F |
| 7. After the man who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away. | T | F |
| 8. While the cash register contained money, the story does not state how much. | T | F |
| 9. The robber demanded money of the owner. | T | F |
| 10. The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to; the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and a member of the police force. | T | F |



Practical Exercise

“The Cash Register Exercise”

- **Answer key:**

1. A businessman turned off the lights. How do we know he is the owner?
2. A man demanded money. How do we know he was the robber?
3. A man demanded money.
4. The owner opened the cash register, but was the owner a man?
5. Who did scoop up the contents of the cash register? Is it possible the owner did?
6. Someone did open the cash register.
7. Who did scoop up the contents of the cash register?
8. What was in the cash register?
9. From whom did the man demand money from?
10. What about the businessman?

